

TRAFFIC IN VOTES

And Suffrage to the Highest Bidder.

THE ELECTION IN HENRICO

Was Merely a Simple Transaction of Bargain and Sale.

MARKET VALUE OF BALLOTS

Cheap Early in the Day, But Rapidly Increasing in Price.

CITIZENS OF THE COUNTY BOUGHT,

And Their Choice of Candidates Easily Changed.

THE OLD SOLDIERS AS A JOB LOT.

Eighty-Three of the Veterans at Three and a Half a Head.

AN IMMENSE AMOUNT OF MONEY USED.

The Most of It Spent by Candidates Anderson and Brauer—Witnesses of These

Methods of Politics Talk Frankly to

A Times Reporter of What They

Know—Some Men Bought by

One Candidate Who Voted

for His Opponent—De-

tails of Henrico's

Shame.

The unsavory reputation which the

county of Henrico has made heretofore

for corruption in politics was discounted,

surpassed, and altogether outdone in the

recent Democratic primary for the nomination

of county officers.

The conditions which existed at the

polls on that day were so debased and

debauched that it was shocking to some

of the most hardened politicians, and

the shame of the thing is yet the daily

talk of men who believe in "practical

politics" and defeating the enemy by

any possible means, but they draw the

line on corruption when it comes to a

fight inside the party, and some of the

men who have worked at the polls during

the darkest days of past contests in

the county are unshaken in their criticisms

of the practices which obtained

at the primary on March 28th.

THE USE OF MONEY.

The election was characterized by the

most unblushing and flagrant use of

money, and the methods resorted to for

securing votes were the most demoralizing

ever known before in Virginia.

Men bartered their suffrage in the open

market to the highest bidder, and the

longest purse was often the measure of

success in obtaining a vote.

Candidates had representatives at the

polls with rolls of one, two, and five-dollar

bills, and it was not only made plain

what they were there for, but they had

it understood almost about that money

could be secured of them by the

voter who would cast his ballot according

claims to have used much less than the

lowest sum named.

BEATING AROUND THE BUSH.

Besides the usual method of paying

men to come to the polls and work all

day for a candidate, numerous other

plans were adopted for securing voters

under the guise of hiring them as work-

ers.

Men were "allowed" the amount of

their day's pay to come to the polls and

vote.

Others were given a dollar and a half

to ride a horse to the polls and allow

the use of the animal in drumming up

votes. Many wagons were hired in the

same way.

Another method that was used in the

late primary was to negotiate through a

third party. A man would approach the

candidate, and ask him, "How much will you give for

one, two, or six votes?" After a sufficient

amount of dickering on the part of seller

and buyer a price would be agreed upon.

The negotiations would go on and return

with the number of voters agreed upon,

take them to the polls and vote them,

and collect the money for them. Even

these masquerading tactics were discarded

later in the day, and many times the

money was seen to change hands between

the buyer and the voter open and

above board.

The election progressed without any ap-

parent use of money until about 11

o'clock, when it became evident that

money was being used. Each candidate

accuses the other of having commenced

it first, and made the other an unwilling

competitor in such methods.

COMPETITION THE LIFE OF TRADE.

Votes were bought at small prices at

first, but the prices went up as the com-

petition increased, and votes that cost

\$2 or \$3 at midday were held at from \$5

to \$10 before sundown.

The candidates not only bought votes,

but they bid for votes and work all

day for a candidate, and well authenti-

cated incidents are told where men paid

to work at the polls for one candidate

received the money of another candi-

date for his vote.

The evidence of such transactions were

easily obtained, and it is probably the

most debauched election that ever took

place in the State.

Votes were purchased at precincts in a

wholesale manner where no bribery was

ever known before.

It is said by many that are familiar

with elections in Henrico that the first

time money was used in the county for

buying votes was during the Waddill-

Sands contest for clerkship two years ago,

and although the methods were more

open and the amount expended much

larger in the recent primary, the demor-

alization which now exists is said to date

from that contest.

Money was used at every precinct in

the county, but some were more noto-

rious for the shameful manner in which

they sold their honor and self-respect

than in others.

FAILED TO DELIVER.

At Jones' store the vote-buyers were

persistent in offering money to persons

to vote for their candidates. I was told

by two men at this precinct that they

received money from the representative

of one candidate and then voted for the

man of their choice.

I found no difficulty in securing evi-

dence from both those who purchased

the votes and those who received the

money, that the charges made of such

disgraceful methods were true.

A well-to-do-looking man drove up to

Shumaker's precinct in a buggy and when

approached and asked to vote for a candi-

date was induced to change his deter-

mination to vote for another candidate

for a drink.

At the same precinct a father and

three sons accepted one dollar each for

their votes.

BOUGHT THE VETERANS.

At this precinct is polled the votes of

the inmates of the Soldiers' Home, and

one of the most pitiable features in the

entire election was the wholesale pur-

chase of these grizzled, old veterans.

It is a well-known fact that they were

like sheep to the shambles and cast bal-

lots that were paid for at so much a

vote.

One squadron of eighty-three old vet-

erans were bought for \$3.50 a piece, two

dollars of the amount being paid by a

candidate for treasurer and the balance—

one and a half—by a candidate for com-

missioner of the revenue.

These old veterans were also dined

and whiskied by one of the candidates

and many of them left the scene in a

maddened stupor. Some of them were

offered \$5 for their votes by other

candidates.

At some precincts it is believed that

more than one-half of all the ballots

cast were bought votes, and honorable

men who came to vote were so dis-

gusted with what they saw that they re-

turned home without voting.

At Hungary precinct votes were bought

in large numbers at prices ranging from

three to seventeen dollars and a half. The

voter asked twenty-five dollars for his

vote, but after haggling around all day

seeking the highest bidder for his

suffrage, finally compromised at \$10.

A number of votes were paid for at

Hungary at the rate of eight and ten

dollars each.

TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER.

At Hardin's Shop the sale was to the

highest bidder. Votes were bought open-

ly. Several eye witnesses testify that

money was paid for votes in full sight

of the spectators, and that men were

brought in by the wagon load, voted at

a stated price and the money delivered

on the spot. In one or more cases it was

found that the money was not given

until the votes were cast, and they were

promised, and the money was demanded

back, and the seller of his vote made to

disgorge.

Almost numberless incidents of vote-

buying are told by persons who paid

out and received money.

At Town Hall precinct the methods

were also flagrant and voters put them-

selves up to the highest bidder, and

many of them were buying votes for a

candidate for treasurer said it reminded

him of a horse auction. It was known

at different times during the day what

was the market price of votes. The low-

est sold about one dollar and the highest

price paid was \$8. A ticket holder at

this precinct remarked that he would

not like to be tried for his life before a

jury from that precinct if any money

was at stake.

It is charged that a number of votes

were polled at Shumaker's precinct by

persons who lived in the city. I found

one Richmond man, who admitted that

he voted at Shumaker's illegally in this

way.

The cases of buying votes were so

many that no difficulty was experienced

in finding examples at any of the pre-

cincts. The candidates charged each other

with trying to control entire precincts

with money, and I was told by one of

the men who handled the money for a

candidate for treasurer, that he did not

think there were more than thirty out

of about one hundred votes polled at

the precinct at which he was stationed

that were not bought votes.

At one of the largest precincts one of

the candidates came up and being told

by one of his workers, a man prominent

in the affairs of the county, that votes

were high at that precinct, the candi-

date told the worker to secure a pre-

cinct no matter what it cost. This is

denied by the friends of the candidate

charged with giving these instructions,

but the incident goes to show the spirit

and the methods that prevailed that day.

Shumaker's was the precinct in ques-

tion, and it is said that as soon as the

buying of votes commenced there it be-

came known quickly at other precincts

and the same methods were soon adopted

wherever voting was in progress.

FROM BOTH SIDES.

Both of the leading candidates for

treasurer charge each other with the

same offence, at this precinct particu-

larly. It is at least a well-established

fact that a considerable amount of money

was used there and men can be found

who took money from both sides and

then voted for the third candidate.

One man is said to have acknowledged

that he received money for his vote from

two candidates, and then failed to cast

his ballot at all.

So anxious were the candidates for

votes, and their workers so reckless in

the manner in which they paid out money

for them, that they could not in many

cases tell after the vote was polled which

candidate secured it.

At least one of the candidates told me

that he found out that men who got

his money voted against him, and he cited

one case in which he paid a man \$2.50

as a worker, before and on the day of

election, who for a small sum voted for

one of his opponents.

Another case is well authenticated

where a man received \$5 from one candi-

date as a worker at the polls and was

bought to vote for another candidate

for it.

Yet another case is vouched for by a

respectable eye witness where a voter

started to the polls to vote for one candi-

date for treasurer, and was stopped

before the polls and induced by the

price of \$1 to change his vote. The

witness saw the money pass and saw the

candidate take the voter by the arm and

did not let him go until he had marched

to the polls and voted his ballot.

THE FARMERS TOO.

At some of the country precincts

where the farming element predominated

the purchase of votes was not so fre-

quent, but even those precincts were not

exempt. Well-to-do-looking men in a

number of instances, when asked to vote

said that they could not afford to lose

their time to come to the polls to vote

without compensation, and in other ways

indicated that they wanted money for

their votes. It is needless to say that

they cast their votes and went home

richer than when they came to the polls.

A worker at